

# Odd Bits of Washington Life



Clarence  
Rowe

The President took his stance to drive and we could see his shoulders shake with chuckles of appreciation of Fitzgerald's neat comeback.

By EDWARD W. TOWNSEND.

WHEN President Roosevelt found, upon moving into the White House, that his home was in his office or his office in his home, he properly did what any of the five or six Presidents preceding him would have been justified in doing, demanded additions to the White House; one for official uses and one for social purposes. There was not a little opposition to this by those of that not unfamiliar makeup who can see nothing but sacrilege in modifying an antique. They argued as if the White House were an old tea cup or a grandfather's clock, valued for its antiquity, and the more cracked and less adapted for its ostensible purpose the more precious.

But Roosevelt's impetuosity won. Two wings, nicely designed to be inconspicuous and not to detract from the beauty of the main building, were added to the White House; one, extended toward the Treasury Building, contains ample space and facilities for handling, at a reception, hundreds of guests who park their wraps and hats in corridors where colored maids and valets wait upon them, and further along are dressing rooms where women guests may do their last bit of toilet adjustment and give such modest aid to nature as a powder puff effects and where the vainer of the sexes, man, may adjust his tie, smooth or disorder his hair as he prefers, and in other ways prepare to conquer. From the floor where these aids are available guests ascend to the main floor, where the handsome hall, the small parlors, the state dining room and the impressive East Room are the scenes of all the large social affairs.

That East Room has a fascination for me because it was there that Dolly Madison is reported to have hung out to dry the more important and fragile articles of White House laundry. Through the long windows of that handsome room one may step out onto the tiled flat roof of the east extension on a summer night for after dinner coffee and cigars or for promenades between dances.

The Roosevelt west wing is for official uses. There is the Cabinet room, and there the President and the secretary to the President and the White House clerks have their separate rooms, and there is also a room for the press correspondents. These extensions in no degree detract from the beauty or dignity of the White House; they are low, and the lines are drawn with successful purpose to harmonize not only with the famous old building, but also with the landscape; and as the east extension is flanked by the massive Treasury Building and the west by the

State-Army-Navy Building their becoming modesty is emphasized.

The President's large private office is guarded at one door by the office of the secretary to the President, and at all other points of approach by experienced and courteous Secret Service men who have a wide acquaintance with Washington cranks, who are numerous but generally of a harmless variety; those who have cures for all governmental ills but who are quietly shooed away with kindly advice to take up their important business with the constable of their own home town.

The secretary to the President and the executive clerk take proper care of nine out of ten who make their business calls at the offices and ask for interviews with the President, but that remaining one-tenth is numerous; yet if their business can be done only with the President they seldom fail to have a personal interview with him. Any President, my own observation leads me to believe, will inconvenience himself rather than disappoint visitors whose urge to meet him is not political, but it might be said sentimental.

## Wilson Greets School Children.

An instance of this in which I was concerned revealed a winsome phase of President Wilson's character which he is thought by many not to possess. The city of Newark, N. J., part of which is in the Congressional district I represented, reached the venerable age of 250 years before it built a high school in a part of the city known as the Iron Bound District, where are the homes of thousands of industrial workers, largely skilled mechanics, although Newark has the proud record of establishing the second high school in the United States. From the time of the Connecticut Puritans who founded Newark in 1666 until but a few years ago its educational authorities seemed to believe that if the children of laborers were afforded opportunity to become familiar with the three R's, their educational aspirations would be fulfilled. But at last a high school was built in the Iron Bound District and the first class to be graduated was conveyed by the principal and a woman teacher on a tour to Washington. In a letter to me the principal hinted at the pleasure it would give the boys and girls of the class if they could meet the President. I piloted the class to the entrance of the executive offices and, in the absence of Mr. Tumulty, took up the matter with Executive Clerk Rudolph Forster—wise and diplomatic Rudolph!—who said that the President was in conference but he would see what

could be done. Presently he returned from the President's private room, told me to "line up the kids" and in a few minutes Mr. Wilson would see them.

An officer opened a seldom used door to the private office and the children, all smiles, filed in and passed the smiling President, who had a word for each, shaking hands and congratulating them that their district had such a robust and wholesome name: "Iron Bound, it should mean much to you." "You'll make the district proud of you." "First high school class to be graduated." "From the Old Iron Bound." "Glad to meet you pioneers." With such expressions he rejoiced and made proud the youngsters. When they were grouped again on the White House grounds it was a task to suppress their eager desire to give three cheers for the President, which would have shocked the sedate and aristocratic dwellers on the side of Jackson Square.

Mr. Tumulty had many surprising requests, and if he will write another book of his White House experiences telling of the unconventional side of his activities there he will be the author of a best seller. Once a Representative, American born of Irish parents, who affected a whimsical Irish accent, asked Mr. Tumulty to loan him a White House automobile. "What for?" asked the amazed secretary.

"I've a German constituent here who controls a whole ward in my district," the Representative exclaimed. "If I can drive him around Washington in a White House car and show him all the statues to German heroes, no man in his ward can cast a vote for a Congressman other than me except in danger of his life."

"German statues—where are they?"

"Leave me to find them, Joe," the applicant replied.

Mr. Tumulty's own car happened to be parked outside the office, so a way to gratify his friend was easy to devise. The German Boss was taken to the White House, introduced to Mr. Tumulty, who, after a little, said to the Representative: "How would your friend like a ride around town in a White House car?"

"An honor my constituent is well worthy for to receive," exclaimed the Representative.

"I'd do this for no one but you. Keep it to yourself," Mr. Tumulty warned. "The car is just by the gate outside."

The Representative whispered to the chauffeur and they were off. As a result of that whisper the car was driven slowly through "the city of marble, set to the lovely grove," except when it passed a statue; then it speeded.

"There is the Kaiser himself," exclaimed the Representative as they whizzed by

bronze Gen. Jackson on his prancing steed. The German gasped in delighted surprise. "And there is Bismarck," as Gen. Thomas was passed; "and Admiral Tirpitz," as they whirled by Admiral du Pont in bronze; "and here is Von Buelow," and presently the proud but astonished German was convinced that he had caught fleeting glimpses of statues raised to a dozen of Germany's foremost martial heroes.

"Yes," said the Representative, "I think I have had most of them honored, but I'll frankly admit it was hard work in some cases. But I never say die—you know that."

"Your success is colossal!" declared the German. "I'll remember it."

"I'm fixed for reelection as long as I live," the Representative later assured Mr. Tumulty. "Unless that German comes down here some time and makes a tour of Washington in a sightseeing bus, one of those with an operator to name all the statues and everything."

"And if he does?" Mr. Tumulty asked.

"If he does," the Representative replied gloomily, "me for a one way ticket to Australia."

That is one of scores of stories Mr. Tumulty tells—but, alas! not in print—and of course tells with infinite humor and unctious I cannot convey in type.

The first big reception given by the Wilsons taxed even the enlarged facilities for such affairs, and while they withstood the tax the famed East Room itself proved inadequate. That room, at big receptions, is used as a reservoir into which the human flood pours as it will, but is directed out through a channel leading to the parlors where the President stands at the head of the receiving line. This outward flow is controlled by young army and navy officers who mark with silk ropes the course of guests as in single file they approach the receiving line. The trouble arose from the polite but urgent efforts of all those closely packed in the East Room to reach the silken gate at the same time. Then some bright young social aid devised a scheme which worked well and caused some merriment. Beginning at the door leading from the main hall into the East Room and running to the door leading to the reception parlors ran parallel lines of silk cord, marking narrow lanes in the figure of continued S's, and guests could proceed from entrance to exit only through these curving paths. Some called this a "flood control," others said it reminded them of the coil of copper tube which, I am told, plays an important part in the process of manufacturing distilled beverages. The device worked well at the second Wilson reception. The young social aids in their dress uniform beamed hospitably at the discharging end of the coil, and in orderly

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